

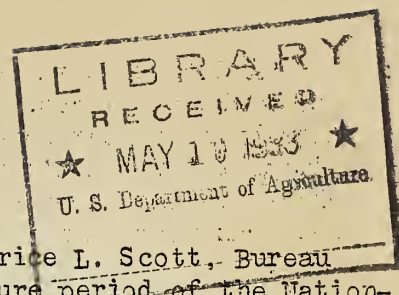
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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

Clothing Economies



An interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman and Miss Clarice L. Scott, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Tuesday, March 21, 1933.

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MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody.

I wish I had time to read you some intensely interesting letters which came recently to the Bureau of Home Economics. Clarice Scott of our textile and clothing staff brought them up for me to read. They are letters from the extension workers in the different States, and they tell how thousands of women in these times are uniting to make and remodel clothes for themselves and for others. As we put all the State reports together, they made a thrilling story. The Red Cross, the schools, the church clubs, the 4-H clubs - everybody it seems is pulling together. The American Red Cross headquarters here tell me that since last September through its many branches it has helped furnish more than four million with clothes. About a million were children who couldn't have gone to school, unless they'd received this clothing.

Many of you listening in today, I know, are taking part in this big job of keeping people decently clad. Perhaps you'll be going this afternoon or tomorrow to the community workroom to help cut and make garments. Maybe you'll be using brand new materials. Or maybe you'll be ripping up old garments and figuring out how to make them over. Anyway, there are always a lot of rather troublesome questions to decide in a community sewing room.

So as Miss Scott and I talked it over I found she had so many good suggestions that I persuaded her to come over, and continue the conversation where you could hear. Miss Scott, suppose we begin where we left off. You were saying, I think, that it saves time and saves material to choose the right patterns.

MISS SCOTT: Yes, I believe that the choice of a pattern is especially important when you're going to use it for making a number of garments. For one thing, choose a simple pattern with as few pieces as will make a good-fitting garment. A pattern like that is easier to understand, and the fewer pieces there are in the pattern, the fewer there are to get lost. You know how it is when a lot of people handle a pattern. Also, you can lay a simple pattern on the fabric so there is little waste, and the garment is easy to put together. The more complicated the pattern, the more seams and finishes you'll have to make, and of course they take time.

MISS VAN DEMAN: That's an idea, all right. In other words, when choosing patterns for the community sewing room, keep away from elaborate designs.

MISS SCOTT: Yes, I'd choose conservative but modish styles cut on fairly straight lines. Of course, children's dresses as well as women's need a few pleats or a slight flare to give fullness and make them comfortable.

(over)

And look at the sleeves. The patterns for some of the new styles have very queer shaped pieces. They're hard to figure out and very wasteful of material. Also by next year more than likely they'll be all out of style. And the ordinary kimona sleeves don't wear well; they usually tear out under the arm. Instead choose raglan sleeves or the roomy set-in type. They're comfortable, almost anybody can wear them without special fitting, and they're the easiest sleeves to make.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Then, Miss Scott, don't you think it's a good plan to make up the pattern in muslin and try it on somebody before cutting out a lot of garments?

MISS SCOTT: Yes indeed, by all means. That's good economy. Oftentimes patterns don't work out just as they look in the picture. The sleeves may be too tight and the skirt may have more fullness than is actually needed. When you make up the pattern in muslin, you can check on all these points and correct the pattern before you cut into the good material. And if you do make changes, be sure to cut a new guide pattern. Even little changes are hard to remember, when you're using several patterns, and in a community sewing room several people may need to use them.

MISS VAN DEMAN: You believe, too, that it's really economy to put garments together carefully and finish them well. I've noticed that in everything you make.

MISS SCOTT: Yes, it's wasteful to take good materials and throw them together. Poorly made clothes soon fray at the seams and pull out of shape. I've seen perfectly good, sometimes expensive materials, wasted all because they were carelessly made up. The plackets were weak, the seams skimpy, and the wrong kind of finishes were used.

And by the way, when we were talking about choosing patterns, I meant to say something about plackets and fastenings. Buttons are expensive and buckles are even more so. Look for designs that have the simplest kind of plackets and need as few fastenings as possible. Patterns often show more buttons than you really need. Also many times you can use a button in place of a buckle or do away with either and use a tie belt instead. These may seem like very small things but when you're making a lot of garments they soon run up the cost.

Good equipment in the community sewing room is also a saving. By good equipment I don't mean expensive equipment. For instance, you can make a good cutting table from a rough board top laid across saw horses and covered with oilcloth put on wrong side up. This slightly rough surface is especially good on a cutting table because it keeps fabrics from slipping. Then be sure to have a well-padded ironing board, with an electric iron, and a sponge and dish to hold water, and plenty of good clean press cloths. Pressing as you sew saves time and helps in making good-looking garments. Also keep on hand sharp scissors that cut clear to the point, plenty of clean pins that won't leave black holes, needles of the right sizes, and thread at least No. 50 and 60 in black and white. I also find a pattern file very convenient. You can make one easily from a wooden box or a good strong carton.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Of course, you're taking sewing machines for granted, well oiled and in good running order. Lots of people are willing to lend their machines for a community enterprise.

Thank you, Miss Scott, for coming over. Will you come again next week and give some help on renovizing our own wardrobes?

MISS SCOTT: Yes, I'll be glad to.

MISS VAN DEMAN: All right, we'll call that a date for next Tuesday.

Goodbye, everybody, for this time.

